

AMONG THE MORMONS

A Survey of Current Literature

Edited by Ralph Hansen

The historian, essentially, wants more documents than he can really use . . .

Henry James. *The Aspern Papers*

History is bunk.

Henry Ford

The books, periodicals, and manuscripts listed in bibliographies are of little value if the materials are not located and made available to those who might have an interest in using them. With this in mind we depart from our previous format to consider bibliographical control of Mormon Americana and the location of libraries and historical agencies which have significant holdings of Mormon materials.

The study of Mormonism should begin in Salt Lake City, where, according to Norman Furniss, "The best collection of materials about the Mormons exists . . . in the archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . ."¹ However, the Church Historian's Library is a "private facility" with the right of access controlled by the authorities who govern the Library. According to the official guide to the Library, ". . . the materials on file are *generally* available for use by the earnest researcher. The materials are not available to those whose purpose is to *discredit* the Church"² (*italics mine*). What does it mean to have materials available generally? Who is the judge of what scholar is out to find the truth or to discredit the Church? To further quote Dr. Furniss, "It is regrettable that the volumes are not open to the Gentile scholar, or even to most Mormon historians; the custodian of the portals, A. Wm. Lund, is adamant in his refusal to let all but the most faithful dip into this record."³

To the average member of the Church trained in the humanities or with any interest in Church history this information is not new or particularly startling. And both Mormon and "Gentile" writers have long since discovered that with the exception of some unique items (i.e., manuscript letters and diaries) they can find all the information about the Mormon Church that they need to write acceptable histories in other libraries in the United States, if they know where to look and take the trouble to go there. And so to a

¹ Furniss, Norman F., *The Mormon Conflict, 1850-1859* (New Haven, Conn., 1960), p. 236.

² *Guide to the Historian's Office Library-Archives* (Office of the Church Historian, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah).

³ Furniss, *ibid.*

large extent the writing of Mormon history continues, sometimes with laudable results and other times failing to fulfill expectations.

A good illustration of my point is contained in the response in this issue of *Dialogue* by Stanley B. Kimball to Klaus Hansen's review (in the Summer issue) of Robert B. Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*. Kimball criticizes Flanders for neglecting a number of important collections of primary sources and in doing so reveals what those sources are (see pp. 189-193). We would add just one thing to Kimball's suggestions: To someone who has served on the staff of the Brigham Young University Library for a number of years it seems incredible that anyone working on a Mormon theme could avoid the Y and still claim to have made a thorough search of the records. But that it is being done is very evident. So that it will not be done as frequently in the future we have invited Dr. S. Lyman Tyler, former Director of the BYU Library, who is now Director of the Bureau of Indian Services at the University of Utah, to write an essay emphasizing the work being done at the Y to gain a modicum of bibliographical control of Mormon sources. Dr. Tyler refers to his work as an "informal essay . . . without being bothered by technical details."

We invite our readers at Harvard, Wisconsin, Princeton, California or wherever there are collections of Mormon materials to submit to *Dialogue* a brief description of holdings in their areas for future publication.⁴

THE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE MORMONS

S. Lyman Tyler

One might say of Mormonism, as the Apostle Paul said of Christianity in his testimony before King Agrippa, "This thing was not done in a corner." Before the Book of Mormon was off the press, references to it appeared in newspapers of the Palmyra area.

The origin, activities, migration, and growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and many of the basic ideas and ideals of Mormons and concerning Mormonism, have been of continuing interest to collectors of the literature about America and the West.

Beginning in 1832 the Church sponsored newspapers and periodicals which carried information about the Mormons to members and non-members alike. These publications also regularly referred to both friendly and unfriendly materials as they appeared in print elsewhere.

The library and archives of the L.D.S. Church Historian, 47 E. South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, represent an effort on the part of the Church to comply with Joseph Smith's request. For the first hundred years of its existence the Church not only acquired but published information concerning the output of the outside press as well as their own publications. The Historian's Library personnel continued to acquire and catalogue all materials

⁴For an excellent example of what can be done see S. George Ellsworth's, "A Guide to the Manuscripts in the Bancroft Library Relating to the History of Utah." *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXII (July, 1954), 197-247.

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pertaining to the Church that come to their attention, and the catalogues they maintain of their collections are a good point of departure for any study of the Mormons.

Andrew Jenson's publication of information available in the Church Historian's Library and Archives is a very real contribution to scholars unable to visit the library. Although many are acquainted with his *Historical Record*, *Church Chronology*, and the four volume *Biographical Encyclopedia*, all are not aware that his *Encyclopedic History* is an indispensable bibliographical tool for the identification and description of early Church newspapers and periodicals, as well as an alphabetic listing and encyclopedic treatment of geographic units within the Church organization and of institutions that are a part of Mormon, Utah, and Western history.

The depression (1930-1940), with its federally sponsored work projects, had an effect on the availability of source materials and of bibliographic information relating to the Mormons. Dale Morgan and Juanita Brooks of the Federal Writers Project and Newbern Butt of Brigham Young University each had a role to play in this: Morgan collected information both of a narrative and bibliographic nature that began to bear fruit almost immediately; the journals, diaries, letters and other source materials that Brooks discovered, and was able to make more widely available by having copies placed in Utah and other western libraries, will continue to be a boon to countless scholars.

Through the National Youth Administration program for needy college students, Newbern Butt found a source of labor that made important contributions to two projects. Persons having diaries, journals, autobiographies, or other important source materials were invited to lend them to Brigham Young University, where typescript copies were made. The ribbon copy and one carbon remained in the university library and another carbon and the original manuscript went to the owner of the manuscript. (The library archivist is anxious now to locate these originals and to invite the owners to place them in the air-conditioned and humidified safety of the library's collection of manuscript materials.)

The second project was to supply indexes for both discontinued and current Church publications. In such early periodicals as *The Evening and the Morning Star*, the *Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, the *Elders' Journal*, and *Times and Seasons* were to be found a contemporary record of the activities of the Church during its formative period. The *Millennial Star*, during the period of the exodus from Nauvoo and until the Church was firmly established in the West, is an essential source for contemporary occurrences.

Indexes have been supplied for these as well as the *History of the Church*, the *Comprehensive History of the Church*, the *Journal of Discourses*, *Conference Reports*, the *Improvement Era*, recent years of the "Church Section" of *The Deseret News*, and other publications significant to Mormon Church history.

If a scholar will use these indexes imaginatively he will find that they open up a variety of approaches to this store of information. Scholars also soon learn that when they have tied an event to a date through the use of an index, by searching other publications for the same period they may find additional information. As an example, for events of national or interna-

tional importance the index to the *New York Times* may lead one to articles in *The Deseret News* or *Salt Lake Tribune* of approximately the same date that will give local coverage of the same event.

One of the early private collectors of what is now referred to as Mormon Americana was Hubert Howe Bancroft. The Mormon and Utah material was collected as part of his larger project, to secure source materials for his multi-volume history of the "Pacific States." This included everything from Central America to Alaska and from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

What Bancroft collected for his publishing venture eventually became the basis of the Bancroft Library, which is a part of the library system at the University of California, Berkeley. A decade or two ago persons doing research in Utah or Mormon history would say, with some resentment, that much of the source material for the history of the region had found its way into the Bancroft Collection.

The libraries of most private collectors tend to find their way, eventually, into the special collections of university or other institutional libraries. In addition to the Bancroft Library, the New York Public Library, Yale, Harvard, the Library of Congress, the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, University of Utah, Utah State University, and other institutional libraries have formed notable Mormon collections usually by building on private collections they have acquired.

During the 1950's the library personnel at Brigham Young University began to search regularly through selected national bibliographies, subject catalogues, periodical indexes, and other bibliographic tools to discover, list, and acquire publications that contained information pertaining to the Mormons. At the same time a systematic program was begun to identify what had been published in the past. A standard bibliography such as Joseph Sabin's *A Dictionary of Books Relating to America, From Its Discovery to the Present Time* (20 vols.; New York, 1868-1936) was searched item by item (since it does not contain a subject index) for the works it includes that relate to Mormonism.

Nineteenth century periodical indexes and individual indexes that were available for certain publications, as well as indexes for the present century, were combed for articles of Mormon interest. As the search proceeded it was learned that persons such as George Ellsworth (Utah State University) and Newbern Butt had done pioneer work in this kind of indexing. These persons were invited to lend BYU the results of their research to be checked against the library findings, and any new entries discovered were added. Without exception, these scholars have been cooperative.

In addition to his published bibliographic studies, Dale Morgan, about thirty years ago, began visiting the libraries with significant Mormon collections and listing their holdings to compile a union catalogue of the Mormon materials held by these libraries. This catalogue was turned over to the Utah State Historical Society with the understanding that they would continue the project Morgan had begun.

About 1956 Brigham Young University Library began to cooperate with the Historical Society in the maintenance of this catalogue by furnishing secretarial help to assist the Society's librarian, John James. This cooperative effort has expanded to include representatives from the Church His-

torian's Library (Earl Olson), the University of Utah (Ray Canning), and Utah State University (George Ellsworth), as well as Brigham Young University and the State Historical Society, to form an editorial committee to assist with the preparation of this catalogue for publication.

The University of Utah representative was recently able to secure a research grant from the University to enable Chad Flake, Special Collections Librarian at Brigham Young University, to devote full-time during a sabbatical leave granted by BYU to editorial work on the catalogue and further work in research libraries to bring the union catalogue up to date.

It is presently contemplated that the first unit of this projected catalogue will cover the first hundred years of Mormonism (1830 through 1929). Everett Cooley, Director of the State Historical Society, is chairman of the committee, and the work is proceeding under his general direction, with John James's assistance and with Dale Morgan as a consultant. The second unit (1930 through 1959) will likely contain as many items as the hundred-year unit.

To provide bibliographic coverage for current publications, the following compilations* now appear regularly:

1. *Mormon Americana* (Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah, semi-monthly from 1960). Published as a joint project by libraries interested in material on Utah and Mormons.
2. "Mormon Bibliography," *Brigham Young University Studies* (Provo, Utah, annually from 1961). The first annual compilations, beginning with material published for the year 1960, were the work of Ralph W. Hansen; and recent years are compiled by Chad Flake.
3. *Index to Church Periodicals of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Brigham Young University Library, monthly from 1966). This work is cumulated into a bound volume at the end of the year.

As indexing programs are prepared for computers, they will include the capability of machine searching on various subjects for chronological periods, etc. It is anticipated that the Mormon bibliographies mentioned above will eventually be placed in machine language so the information can be manipulated to facilitate a variety of different approaches to it.

The bibliographic control of information relating to Mormonism has improved considerably in the last decade. There seems good reason to believe that such improvement will continue in the decade that lies ahead.

* In addition "Among the Mormons: A Survey of Current Literature" appears quarterly from 1966 in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. The coverage is not always meant to be exhaustive but has the advantage of critical annotation. Covered in the Spring and Summer issues are books, reprints, records, and dissertations and theses; the Fall issue will usually deal with special subjects and the Winter issue with articles in periodicals.

RECENTLY RECEIVED

Joseph Schenck. "Itzamna, The Great Hand (Archaeological Evidence Relative to the Book of Mormon)." Privately printed by the author, 2601 Natural Bridges, St. Louis, Mo. 1st Edition, 28pp. \$.35. The Great Hand is a carving found at a Mayan "Crucifixion Altar" with a nail piercing the

palm, which Schenck, a member of the Reorganized L.D.S. Church, believes is evidence that Jesus Christ was known to the Mayan people.

Harold Schindler. *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*. To be published by the University of Utah Press in November. Available until October 31 at a pre-publication discount.

The first two issues of *Dialogue* discussed a plethora of dissertations, and, as one would expect, additions have been called to our attention:

Max L. Carruth, "Adjustment of Fifty Mormon Golden-Wedding Couples Living in Salt Lake City" (Utah, 1953).

Mark K. Allen, "Personality Factors Related to Religious Authoritarianism" (Stanford, 1955).

Garland E. Tickemyer, "The Philosophy of Joseph Smith and its Educational Implications" (University of Texas, 1963).

Leon Roundy Hartshorn, "Mormon Education in the Bold Years" (Stanford, 1965).

The Church is a continuing revolution against any and all the norms of society which fall below the gospel standards.

*Harold B. Lee
L.D.S. Conference
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